

HANKS GENEALOGY  
ENLOE, ABRAHAM

DRAWER 1A-Preceding Divisions-Front of Drawer

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# Thomas Lincoln Family

## Rumors about Abraham Enloe as Abraham Lincoln's Father

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Letter from Mrs. Chenault, Mt. Sterling

Sept. 24, 1925.

Dear Cousin Lyle:

The long looked for letter came yesterday, so I hasten to write, because I know you are anxious to hear "what is".

There are the two stories concerning Lincoln's birth, but no documentary evidence to support either. This is what my brother-in-law, Mr. Evans, knows about the pedigree of Nancy Hanks.

Cadwallader Evans was one of three brothers who emigrated from Wales to America; his daughter, Lucy, married a worthless fellow named Hanks. Lucy died soon after coming to Bourbon Co., Ky. She was married in Penn. where her father lived, but she and Hanks came with John Evans, Cadwallader's brother, to Ky. Nancy was born in the old stone house which I pointed out to you the day we were in Bourbon. My great grand father once owned the place. The next time you come to see us we must take lunch and picnic at the Nancy Hanks spring near-by. Having no influence other than the worthless father's, the orphan, Nancy, "just grewed". Both stories agree ~~xxx~~ until this point is reached. One is that Hanks and Nancy moved to southern Ky. where she married Tom Linkhorn and Abe was born three years later. They agree on this point also, that Abe Inslow, a wealthy, educated man, a debater, prominent in public life, educated Nancy--provided funds for that purpose. Linkhorn had no education, but he was a suitor of Nancy's. She was a bright girl of unusual charm, but had not had the careful rearing accorded to girls of her day. However it would pass unnoticed today, ha! ha! She spent much time in making dyes for bright clothes for self-adornment. My people have lived always within fifteen or twenty miles of the scenes of these happenings. In those early days our ancestors lived in the same neighborhood as the Hanks. Mrs. Henry M. Jones of Winchester, Clinton Ave., will tell you this and more if you care to write to her. Abe Inslow was interested in more than the education of Nancy, and it so happened that the worthless Hanks, her father, and Linkhorn willingly accepted the goodly sum of money the wealthy Inslow offered, and departed for southern Ky. Inslow was seized with a desire to see Abe Lincoln, so set out one day when the child was a few years old--Linkhorn had changed the spelling of his name, and as he had always loved Nancy he didn't welcome the visitor; they fought, and Lincoln bit the top of Inslow's ear off. The second Mrs. Tom Lincoln took all the kinks out of Tom and finally made a useful man of him. He was a spurned lover of Nancy's, so it wasn't hard to get him to marry her.

I'm afraid the gentleman from Virginia will not be interested, as there is no evidence. Tell him to come to see us, and we will take him to Bourbon and let him hear the hand-me-down stories. It may all have been a political lie, but no one around here believes it to be. Brother Charlton (Mr. Evans) used to tell me that there was said to have been a strong resemblance between the two Abes. But he seems to be on the defensive now. Descendants of the settlers still live in the Hanks' neighborhood, many of them my cousins; the land passed on to the children; no strangers have come there. But after all it is hear-say. There were the letters, but they were destroyed.

Chas. J. Stephenson

# Lincoln's N. C. Background Cited

By WILLIAM S. POWELL.

The nation this week marks the birthday of one of her great heroes, Abraham Lincoln. At the same time North Carolina might well give some heed to the story of his mother, Nancy Hanks, who spent a number of her girlhood years in this State.

Numerous accounts of her parentage have been advanced, many with equal claim to authenticity. All, however, agree that Nancy was born out of wedlock to Lucy Hanks in Virginia and spent her early years in the care of relatives.

An even larger number of stories have been related concerning the birth of Abraham Lincoln, himself. Many of these would make him a North Carolinian, but not one offers sufficient evidence to overcome the proof of official records to the contrary. Leading historians have completely disproved all the scurrilous stories which grew up to serve unworthy opponents on both sides of the Mason and Dixon line in the last century.

## Gaston County.

About the time of the Revolutionary War several families from Virginia settled on the Catawba River near what is now Belmont in Gaston County. Among these families were the Shipleys, Berrys, Hanks, and Lincolns. Many of these family names are still to be found in that section of the State. One of the Lincolns was Abraham Lincoln, the grandfather of the President, and it was here that his son, Thomas, father of the President, was born.

Richard Hanks, better known as Dicky Hanks, was among these settlers and his niece, Nancy Hanks, was a member of his household. She lived with his family here until he moved to another place near present-day Dallas in the same county. He is recorded as a resident of the county in the first federal census which was made in 1790.

The site of his cabin on one of the bluffs overlooking the Catawba River was marked a number of years ago with a large granite boulder bearing a bronze plaque with a replica of a pioneer's cabin and this inscription: "This stone marks the site of the log cabin of 'Dicky Hanks,' an uncle of Nancy Hanks, mother of Abraham Lincoln. Nancy spent much of her girlhood here with her uncle." The boulder rests on a group of stones which once formed a part of the chimney of Dicky Hanks' cabin. Beautiful trees now surround the site and fresh water still flows from the family's spring at the bottom of the hill.

After Hanks left, his cabin was purchased by a neighbor who moved its logs to his own farm and used them to build a corn crib. The same logs later were used to build a house for storing cotton. This last building was moved still another time and it now stands on the Stowe farm a short distance south of Belmont.

At Pineville in Mecklenburg County, not far from the birthplace of President Polk, Nancy Hanks is said to have attended school. It is not improbable that she was at school on the November day when James K. Polk was born, since she was twelve years old that year—1795.

Young Tom Lincoln wandered away from his Lincoln County home (Gaston then was Lincoln County, named for Gen. Benjamin Lincoln whom Washington appointed to receive the sword of Cornwallis at Yorktown) and made his way to the wonderful region of Kentucky. Daniel Boone, who had lived not too far away, was leading settlers into that country and North Carolina's Col. Richard Henderson was spreading word of its beauty in an effort to further the interests of a land company which he had organized. Tom Lincoln later returned to North Carolina to visit relatives and met the youthful Nancy Hanks. When her uncle moved, Nancy went to live in the adjoining county of Rutherford in the home of Abraham Enloe. She assisted Mrs. Enloe with her household duties. When the Enloe family moved to Swain County, Nancy Hanks accompanied them, but soon joined some of her relatives in Kentucky and later married Tom Lincoln there.

At the time of her marriage in 1806 Nancy Hanks is said to have been of medium height and to have had light hair, beautiful eyes, a sweet sensitive mouth, and a kindly, gentle manner. Her famous son always recalled her thus.

Nancy Hanks Lincoln died in Indiana in 1818 at the age of 35.

*News + Observer, Raleigh, N.C. 2-10-52*

Asheville Citizen 2-11-55

Roaming The Mountains

# Abraham Enloe-- Lincoln's Father?

By JOHN PARRIS

MINGUS CREEK, Feb. 10—The old house is only a memory, but the ghosts of a man and a maid—and a boy who became president—are still around to haunt historians.

To those who knew the house, it was a part of the story of Abraham Lincoln and the myths that have grown out of his obscure boyhood.

For it was here in the Great Smokies of Western North Carolina, according to tradition, that the story of the great American folk hero had its beginning.

There were some who contended that Lincoln was born here.

There is no argument that Nancy Hanks, his mother, lived in the house as a servant, leaving under a cloud of speculation and gossip to go to Kentucky where she married Tom Lincoln.

Folks hereabouts were convinced that Abraham Enloe, in whose house Nancy Hanks was a servant, was the real father of Abraham Lincoln.

The tradition that Lincoln was his illegitimate son has persisted for almost 150 years. The folks who grew up with it are dead. So is the man who dared chronicle it for posterity.

Time was when the story was good country store gossip and warmed over in the chimney corner after the children had been put to bed.

But no longer.

Recently there was not even a mild flurry of interest when a new edition of the published tradition was placed on bookshelves here.

Like so much of the mountain folklore, the Lincoln tradition would now be only a vague sketch to tease the memory if the late James H. Cathey had not come along.

Cathey worked for years in documenting the tradition and spent his own money to finance publication of the book because he was convinced that Enloe was the father of Lincoln.

A writer and one-time representative of Jackson County in the State Legislature, Cathey wrapped up the tradition of Lincoln's birth in a volume titled "The Genesis of Lincoln, or Truth Is Stranger Than Fiction." It was first published in 1899.

The tradition as related by Cathey—and documented by dozens of letters and affidavits—is that Enloe was Lincoln's father by Nancy Hanks, a servant girl in his household.

According to Cathey, Nancy Hanks, at the age of eight, came to work for him while he was still living in Rutherford County. When several years later, he migrated to the Great Smokies, she was brought along.

Soon after moving here, Enloe became entangled with her and it was soon obvious that Nancy Hanks was going to have a baby. There followed a family quarrel and Mrs. Enloe insisted that the girl leave.

Several persons quoted by Cathey claim that the child was born in the Enloe household; others insist it was born in Haywood County, north of Waynesville at the home of Felix Walker.

But they all agree that Enloe paid Tom Lincoln to take Nancy Hanks and her child to Kentucky.

Following his intensive, years-long study, Cathey wrote that the tradition subsisted on four points:

1. That in the early years of the 19th century Nancy Hanks took up her abode at Abraham Enloe's in the capacity of hired girl.

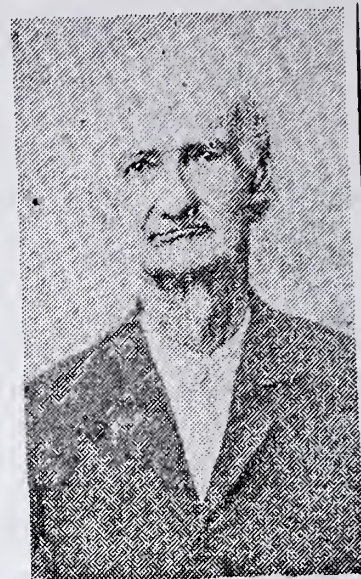
2. That this same girl, Nancy Hanks, while living at Enloe's became enceinte, or entangled in an embarrassment in which her illegitimate child was the unconscious instigator.

3. That the wife of Abraham Enloe, believing her husband the father of Nancy Hank's child, de-

manded that the servant girl leave.

4. That Abraham Enloe heeded the demand of his wife and immediately effected the transportation of Nancy Hanks and her child to Kentucky.

"So confident and persistent," Cathey wrote, "have the keepers of this old testimony to the origin of Abraham Lincoln been, when plied with questions, that there is no opening for superstition, and the most one who was inclined to be skeptical could do was wonder and say nothing.



WESLEY M. ENLOE at 88. According to a Western North Carolina tradition, he was the half-brother of Abraham Lincoln.

"One might hug his incredulity by imagining that the people who gathered the strange accounts of Nancy Hanks and Abraham Enloe and a child, and the wonderful story of the striking personal likeness of Abraham Lincoln and Wesley Enloe (a son of Abraham Enloe), are illiterate, fanatical folk who have conjured up a fragmentary fable . . . but this incredulity is all cleared away when one learns that the custodians of the Lincoln tradition are numbered by the scores and hundreds of the first people of Western North Carolina."

Cathey, in a statement obtained from Wesley Enloe, quoted the son of Abraham Enloe as saying:

"I was born after the incident between father and Nancy Hanks. I have, however, a vivid recollection of hearing the name Nancy Hanks frequently mentioned in the family while I was a boy. No, I never heard my father mention it.

"Nancy Hanks lived in my father's family. I have no doubt the cause of my father's sending her to Kentucky is the one generally alleged. The occurrence as understood by my generation and given to them by that of my father, I have no doubt is essentially true."

Abraham Enloe was born in South Carolina. He came to North Carolina and settled in Rutherford County, and in 1803 migrated to Swain County, here in the Smokies.

He was by profession a farmer. He owned the best, and at first the only, horses in the settlement. He also possessed the only forge and blacksmith tools.

He was the father of nine sons and seven daughters.

He was a large man, well over six feet, muscular and sinewy. His hair was stiff and black, and his complexion was inclined to tawny.

# ✕ Letters to The Editor

## The Lincoln Myth

Editor of *The Citizen*:

Old tales, like old soldiers never die, and some of them never fade away; especially is this true of the myth about the birth of Abraham Lincoln.

I think it is time to cease slandering the good name of a mother who gave to our country one of our noblest presidents.

If those with a taste for gossip and the sensational would read history instead of listening to "old wives tales" they would find the following facts to be true:

Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married on June 12, 1806; a daughter, Sarah, was born to this couple in 1807, and on February 12, 1809—nearly three years after their marriage—a son was born in a backwoods cabin three miles south of Hodgenville, Kentucky, whom they named Abraham Lincoln, after his grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, who was killed by Indians.

In any city or telephone directory you will find many people bearing the same name, and "Nancy" is not an uncommon name, so it is possible there was a servant girl living with the Enloe family named Nancy Hanks, to whom a son was born, fathered by Abraham Enloe; but, according to history, this was not the Nancy Hanks who married Thomas Lincoln, and gave to our country a president who saved our Union.

ARABELLA O. HOUSTON  
Hendersonville.

## Lincoln's Father

Editor of *The Citizen*:

I want to thank you for the article about the father of Abraham Lincoln. It has already been put with other newspaper clippings I have filed.

I am a native of these parts—came from a family of pioneers in Western North Carolina. As such, I have often heard from older members of my family, and others, that Abraham Lincoln descended from a man who lived in this part of the country. However, my family and friends have never been able to think of the man's name. Since there was no reference to it in any of the several books about Lincoln which I have read, I had begun to think of it as one of those tales that would finally be forgotten. Now, with your article, I can at least refresh my memory.

MARIA B. FLETCHER,  
Fletcher, N. C.

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*Schenck Citizen*  
Editorial Page

Feb 23, 1955

June 13, 1955

Lincoln National Life Foundation,  
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

I understand that your organization is making a great effort to ascertain more about the lineage of outmartyred president, Abraham Lincoln. Twenty years ago we lived for a time in Asheville, N.C. and met a roving artist called Silhouette Charley--probably fifty then. He told us of having been in Bryson City, a tiny mountain town where many of the inhabitants bore striking resemblance to Abraham in face and build and grudgingly admitted a relationship. Crayon portraits on their walls verified it also.

This Charley urged us to go to the Asheville Public Library and ask the lady in charge to see a brochure on the true story of Lincoln's birth which was kept away from the open shelves. This we did and read the booklet with great interest. So much has been invested in the shrines of his supposed birth place in Kentucky, his parents' marriage house that North Carolina would never be allowed to compete, even if the story were less pitiful. Lincoln was born there in 1806 and his father was a powerful man whose feats of strength were almost legendary. He was of Scotch ancestry, coming from an ambitious, studious line of schoolmasters. He had a sturdy big pioneer home, a wife and seven children. As was customary, a spinning and weaving woman came to stay with them and provide for the clothing needs by her labor, (she and her daughter, Nancy Hanks) for board and some pay. There was a daughter also named Nancy in this family and so near the age of the little spinner that a deep friendship developed between them. As the mother had never been married she welcomed a chance to leave her there when she resumed her travelling career.

Lincoln himself has said his grandfather was a Virginia <sup>gentleman</sup> planter, so the girl had natural refinement and charm seldom seen in those regions. Being fatherless, she was doubly attracted to this big-hearted, heroic type of man, and lost her heart to him. When her condition was apparent, there was a dreadful time in the household—boundless indignation from the wife and mother of the seven, so she was driven out to take refuge some distance away where she bore little Abraham, named for his father.

At the time the story was written there were still living many persons, twenty-six I think, who had cared for this baby, or knew details which were written down and all notarized. There were never any people in Kentucky who saw or knew of him as a baby. She, Nancy Hanks, was still living too near to leave any peace of mind for the outraged wife. She insisted that she must be sent much further away. So when the little chap was two (or three) the distracted man, Abraham ----- managed to locate a single man who was heading for Kentucky and glad to take along the disgraced girl and her child for a cash settlement, such as few hill-folks could have given him. Whether there was any pretence of marriage then, I do not recall. Preachers came only once a year <sup>or less</sup> <sup>often</sup> in those remote parts, according to the account in Harrodsville, Ky where I visited the log-cabin called the "marriage house." Doubtless she was given a horse as she set off into the wilderness, and ~~and~~ braved the dangers of wild animals with little Abe on the saddle with her, <sup>riding</sup> ~~filed~~ through the endless forests and over the mountains with the ignorant, unloving man who must be her mate.

Thomas Lincoln was illiterate and proud of it. He was a short, thickset man rather blond than dark, without a trace of public spirit or honor. His treatment of Nancy became cruel as he tired of her and may have been intensified in order to hurt her son by the man she loved. To see his own mother horse-whipped by her husband until the blood streamed down her back was a sight so seared into his heart that he had a feeling for the cruel treatment negroes endured, such as no white boy could feel, in a normal environment. In later life, he never showed a trace of regard for the man whose surname he bore, and most reluctantly paid for his tombstone.

There was said to have been an infant son who died at birth, born in 1809, so the records were made, giving Abraham the benefit of this date within a legal limit altho' he had become quite a sizeable boy by this time.

Considering the men of genius, like Leonardo da Vinci and Alexander Hamilton who came into the world under a similar shadow, it would seem as though adults should be able to learn the truth without being demoralized. This would explain the singular reticence of Robert Todd Lincoln to share family memoirs with the public.

(Mrs.) Louise Browning

HENDERSON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL WORKBOOKS

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"ABRAHAM LINCOLN: A LOCAL TRADITION"

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# The State Journal-Register

35 cents

City edition

Wednesday, February 12, 1992

Springfield, Illinois

## Lincoln had family ties to slavery

### Two ancestors were overseers — scholar

By KEVIN McDERMOTT

STAFF WRITER

At least two of Abraham Lincoln's ancestors were plantation overseers, and one of them beat a runaway slave to death, according to new research being presented in Springfield today.

Furthermore, the 16th president likely knew about his family's tainted past, according to Maryland writer

■ The National Park Service soon will be studying sites and architectural firms for an Abraham Lincoln Center in Springfield. **CITY/STATE, page 17**

and historian Paul Verduin, who will speak as part of the annual Lincoln Heritage Lectures this morning at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site.

"Lincoln freed the slaves; could some family stories have been passed on to him that gave him shame about slavery?" said Verduin, who has spent five years tracing Lincoln's maternal lineage back to before the Revolutionary War.

There's no way to confirm that Lincoln was aware of the overseers in his family, Verduin said. "But it was not that far back in the family's past."

Verduin edits *The Lincolnian*, a bi-monthly publication based in Washington, and will outline his research today at the Lincoln Home Visitors Center.

His study focuses on the family history of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, the president's mother. That branch of the family tree has been neglected by scholars, in part because Nancy Hanks was an illegitimate child — a subject kept secret by Lincoln and downplayed or even distorted by some historians.

Verduin uncovered original Hanks-related documents in court-houses and repositories in seven states. He said his research shows more strongly than ever that Lincoln's mother was an illegitimate child. Her father remains unknown.

But Verduin also found a deeper family secret, one that apparently hasn't come to light before: one of Lincoln's maternal great-grandfathers, Joseph Hanks, and a maternal great-great-grandfather, William Lee (Joseph Hanks' father-in-law), were slave overseers in Richmond County, Va., before the Revolutionary War.

According to Verduin's study, Lee was born in 1707 and became a Richmond County plantation overseer. Verduin found criminal court minutes dated May 18, 1743, showing that Lee had been charged with beating a runaway slave to death over a period of three days.

The outcome of the trial is unknown. Additional records long since were destroyed by fire.

A typical punishment for murdering a slave, Verduin writes in his study, was "a severe lashing and the branding of his left thumb with the letter 'M' — for manslaughter."

Lee's daughter, Ann, married Joseph Hanks in the late 1750s, and by 1782 Hanks had been hired as overseer at another Richmond County plantation, Verduin found. By 1784, the couple migrated to Kentucky with several children.

One of them, Lucey Hanks, born in 1786, gave birth to two illegitimate children before she married and had eight more kids in wedlock. Lucey Hanks' first illegitimate daughter, Verduin and other historians believe, was Nancy Hanks, Lincoln's mother. She died in 1818, when Lincoln was 10.

Lincoln did know about his mother's illegitimacy, and Verduin be-

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## LINCOLN

From page 1

lieves Lincoln knew the rest.

Verduin noted that while Lincoln was growing up, many of his Hanks cousins and other relatives were neighbors, including great-uncle William Hanks, who was old enough to remember the Revolutionary War.

"Any time Lincoln wanted to know something about his mother's family, all he had to do was ask old William Hanks," Verduin said. "I have to believe he did that at some point."

Verduin's speech, titled, "Plantation Overseers, Patriots, Pioneers: New Light on Lincoln and his Hanks Forebears," is being presented in conjunction with a speech by historian Richard Current of the University of North Carolina.

Current, one of the nation's top Lincoln scholars, will discuss Lincoln's influence on America's rise to world power between 1865 and 1914.

The lecture program will begin at 9:30 a.m. today at the Visitors Center, 426 South Seventh St.

In other events today:

■ The American Legion will hold its 58th annual National Pilgrimage to Lincoln Tomb. Veterans will assemble at 10 a.m. at the Tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery.

■ House Minority Leader Robert Michel of Peoria will speak to the Sangamon County Republican Party's annual Lincoln's Day Luncheon at noon at the Prairie Capital Convention Center.

■ The annual Abraham Lincoln Symposium will focus on "The Lincoln Image in Popular Culture," beginning at 1:30 p.m. at the Old State Capitol. It is free and open to the public. Featured are Lincoln historians Gabor Boritt and Harold Holzer.

■ The Abraham Lincoln Association Banquet, with Housing Secretary Jack Kemp as the featured speaker, is at 7 p.m. at the Ramada Renaissance. Reservations are required.

# The Abraham Lincoln Genesis Cover-up

"The Censored Origins of an Illustrious Ancestor"

R. Vincent Enlow

"Abraham Lincoln was of illegitimate origin, his father was Abraham Enloe, and not Thomas Lincoln or anyone else."

James H. Cathey, *The Genesis of Lincoln*, 1899

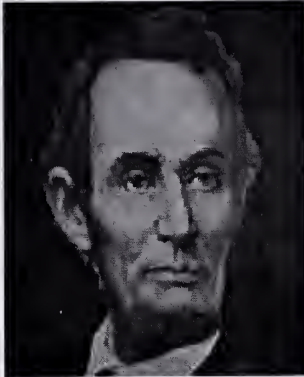
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Additional materials relating to this topic have been published at <http://genealogytoday.com/us/lincoln/index.html>



## Abraham Lincoln's Paternity

*Rumors about the Lincoln family have circulated for many years, including one that Thomas Lincoln was not the true father of Abraham Lincoln, but rather a man called Abraham Enlow. Historian and Lincoln author Ed Steers has written a rebuttal to this argument which he shares below with our readers.*

The challenge to Lincoln's paternity is a very old challenge beginning as early as his nomination for the presidency in 1860. In fact, there are currently a total of 16 individuals who various authors have claimed hold such a distinction, if distinction is the right word. Among these sixteen are such notables as John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, and Patrick Henry. More directly to the question of Abraham Enlow, there are actually four men with the name of Enlow, or a variation thereof, who are alleged to have fathered Lincoln. They are: Abraham Enlow of LaRue County, Kentucky; Abraham Enlows of Hardin County, Kentucky; Abraham Inlow of Bourbon County, Kentucky; and Abraham Enloe of Rutherford County, North Carolina. It is the latter individual that is currently making the rounds.

The Rutherford County claim stems from two early works that can be traced to author James Cathey (and later J. C. Coggins). According to these authors, Abraham Lincoln "...was born in Rutherford County, North Carolina about 1804,..." The extant record disproves this spurious statement.

The earliest record that we have for Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks, is dated June 11, 1806, in Washington County, Kentucky. It is a bond for her marriage to Thomas Lincoln which occurred one day later on June 12, 1806. A second record, the marriage return of the minister who performed the marriage (Jesse Head), is also extant and lists the marriage as occurring on June 12, 1806, in Washington County, Kentucky. We can place both Nancy Hanks and Thomas Lincoln in Washington County, Kentucky at this time. According to the Enloe legend, Abraham would have been two years old at the time (born 1804).

The Enloe legend continues, "After that, Enloe found Tom Lincoln, an itinerant worker, and paid him a sum of money to marry Nancy Hanks and give her and the boy a home and name. Tom Lincoln agreed to the deal and left for Kentucky with little Abe and Nancy, whom he married in 1806"). This statement places Thomas Lincoln in North Carolina between 1804 (little Abe's alleged birth), and 1806 (Tom and Nancy's marriage in Kentucky). While written documentation proving Nancy's whereabouts during 1804 and 1805 is lacking, there exist several oral traditions which place her in the home of Richard Berry in Washington County,

Kentucky during this period, and here is precisely where we find her in June of 1806 adding credibility to those traditions.

More important, however, we do have documentary records which tell us exactly where Thomas Lincoln was living during this period, and considerably before and after this period. Thomas Lincoln can be located in Washington County, Kentucky from 1786 to 1803. From 1803 to 1806, we can document his location in Hardin County, Kentucky (Mill Creek farm near Elizabethtown, Kentucky), and from 1806 to 1808 (Elizabethtown, Kentucky), from 1808 to 1811 (Sinking Spring farm), 1811 to 1816 (Knob Creek farm), etc. Each of these locations is identified by a variety of records which are readily available (tax records, mortgages, jury records, deeds, bills of sale, records of debt, etc.).

During the crucial period of Abraham Lincoln's birth, and Enloe's alleged meeting with Thomas Lincoln, we can unequivocally place Lincoln in Hardin County, Kentucky. So if Enloe met with Lincoln to cut a deal, Enloe must have journeyed from Rutherford County, North Carolina to Hardin County, Kentucky to make the deal. This makes no sense. Enloe surely could have found another "...itinerant worker" in North Carolina to assume the task (for money) rather than undertake so long a journey to Hardin County, Kentucky.

To the best of our knowledge, Thomas Lincoln was never in North Carolina, and can be traced from his place of birth in Rockingham County, Virginia to his place of death in Charleston, Illinois. He never "... left" North Carolina for Kentucky as these authors claim. This is the most damaging evidence against the claim.

What other information do we have which bears on this subject? Abraham Lincoln had an older sister, Sarah Lincoln, born in 1807 in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. If older, she must have been born in North Carolina according to the Enloe legend. Was Enloe also the father of Sarah? If born in 1807, Sarah would in fact be younger than Abe. Assuming Sarah was born in 1807, and was therefore younger than Abraham according to the Enloe legend, all subsequent information about this girl is confusing. She married Aaron Grigsby while living in Indiana with her family in 1828 (age 21) when Abe was yet 19 (or was he 24?). Surely the difference between 19 and 24 would have been obvious.

Equally confusing about this age difference (1804 vs. 1809) can be found in Lincoln's own hand. The earliest record we have of Lincoln is dated 1824 and consists of his writing in a homemade school assignment book. These fragments of Lincoln's school assignments contain a short rhyme which Lincoln wrote about himself as well as simple mathematical calculations. If born in 1804, he would be 20 years old at the time of the writings as opposed to 15 years old (1809). Although open to debate, it seems far more likely that Lincoln was 15 and attending school in 1824 rather than 20 years old. Lincoln did not attend school at the age of 20 or, at least, there are no claims that he was still in school at age 20. While a five year differential is not obvious in the "mature" years of a person's life, it is very obvious during one's early (teen) years.

When the Lincolns left Indiana and moved to Illinois in 1830, Abraham Lincoln helped his parents locate near Decatur (Illinois), helping to erect a cabin. He then

proceeded to strike out on his own winding up in New Salem where he began his long climb to the presidency. This date is important because it represents his becoming 21 years old (the age of majority) and no longer under legal obligation to his father. If born in 1804, he would have been 26 years old, five years past his age of majority. Again, this is not proof, but certainly is more consistent with the accepted birth date of 1809 rather than 1804.

Of course, there are Lincoln's own statements about his nativity. Lincoln wrote in an autobiographical sketch, "I was born Feb. 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky." A skeptic can ignore these statements by Lincoln under the presumption that one can never be absolutely sure where one's paternity resides even with certain documentation. The only reason to reject the 1809 birth date is that the Lincoln's can be unequivocally placed in Kentucky and not North Carolina.

But before we dismiss the currently accepted oral traditions and documentation that supports, and in some instances, proves those traditions, we should ask ourselves why the alternate traditions (Enlow, et. al.) are more believable, and whether they have any documentation to support them. The North Carolina tradition has no documentation (primary records) of any sort to lend credibility to it, and fails when challenged by all the existing documentation that does exist. It is based exclusively on one man's writings decades after Lincoln's death, and to nothing more. My recollection, without specifically checking the records, is that there were a total of sixteen Nancy Hanks living during the period in question. The person most often confused with Lincoln's mother was her aunt (Lincoln's great Aunt), also named Nancy Hanks, who was the mother of an illegitimate child named Dennis Hanks. Adin Baber, a Hanks genealogist, has placed several of these Nancy Hanks in North Carolina (as well as Virginia and Kentucky) during this period. In no instance does he place Nancy hanks Lincoln (or her parents) in North Carolina.

The legend that a man named Abraham Enloe fathered a boy whose mother was named Nancy Hanks may be true, but the woman clearly was not the Nancy Hanks who married Thomas Lincoln and the baby was not Abraham Lincoln who became the 16th President.

Those who find it "...hard to believe that Tom Lincoln, who was stocky, of no more than medium height, low-browed, and with no particular intellectual gifts, was the father of the future President...", should rest easy. All of these characteristics are polygenic, that is, not due to a single gene, but many genes in combination. Those who doubt this genetic fact should take a look at the average heights of the parents of NBA basketball players.

That Thomas Lincoln can clearly be tracked from 1786 through 1851, especially during the crucial period 1803 through 1809, seems proof enough that Abraham Enloe of North Carolina had no knowledge of, or contact with him. This in itself washes away the foundation of the North Carolina claim. Of course, at the time the claim first appeared, its prevaricators did not know records existed in the Kentucky courthouses which would eventually surface and challenge the claim. There are always a few guns that do not smoke until several years after they are

fired. The current case is a good example of this.

While there is more evidence, it is circumstantial, and not as direct as the tracking of Lincoln's father at the time of the alleged Enloe "arrangement."

The best reference to check on the specific question of Lincoln's paternity can be found in *The Lincoln Kinsman* written by Louis A. Warren: Number 31 (January, 1941) and Number 53 (November, 1942). Also William E. Barton, *The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln*, George H. Doran Company, 1920, and Louis A. Warren, *Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood*, Century Company, 1920.

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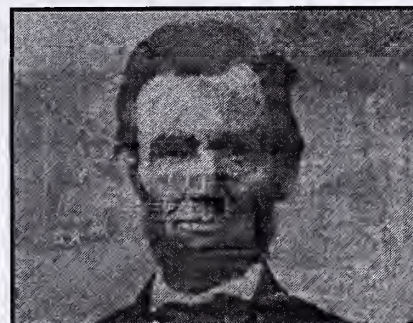
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## A Challenge to Abraham Lincoln's Ancestry

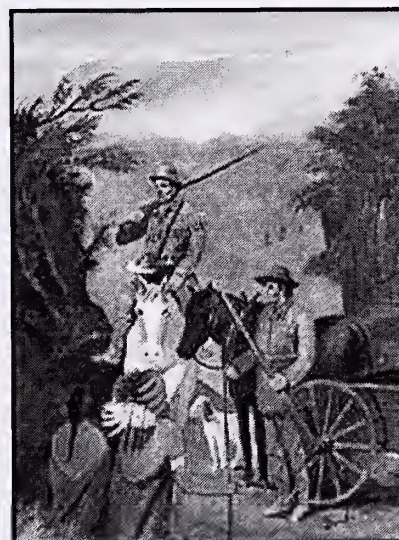


Publishers of history books could be in for a landslide of new business based on some sensational changes in reporting the past. R. Vincent Enlow, a New Jersey resident, has put together some significant research in a powerful disclosure of perhaps the greatest deception of the American public.

### A Ten-Year Labor of Love

"The Abraham Lincoln Genesis Cover-up", available exclusively at Genealogy Today, is bound to raise the hackles of modern day authors and an endless line of experts who have devoted years to perpetuating a fabricated story of our 16th President's heritage, carefully dodging his illegitimate birth in North Carolina.

"The woods are full of Abraham Lincolns, more than one Nancy Hanks, and hundreds (indeed thousands) of self-appointed experts in Lincolnia ready to challenge anything but the Sunday-school story of his origin," explained Mr. Enlow. "I've spent the past 10 years, off and on, working on this project. While no one can say for certain who Lincoln's parents were, there are enough facts here to challenge the 'official' story taught in schools for countless



years."

Abraham Lincoln was probably about six years older than his faked birth date of Feb. 12, 1809, and no more resembled Thomas Lincoln than his true half-brother, Wesley Enloe, who shares the same ultra-lanky frame inherited from their father (see a [photo comparison](#)).

Mr. Enlow details, side by side, the North Carolina and Kentucky traditions, one backed by a wealth of evidence, the other based on assumptions complete with unexplained gaps of time and frequent admissions of unexplainability. [Download the essay](#)

### Mr. Enlow Makes Local News

"I've lived in New Providence for five years and never considered that I could be living with descendants of some pretty famous people," explained Illya D'Addezio,



owner of Genealogy Today. "So you can imagine my surprise when I came home one day and read about the Lincoln story in my local paper." The Independent Press granted Genealogy Today permission to reprint the unique story about Mr. Enlow's theories that was published locally on February 7, 2001. [Read the article](#)

### One Hundred Years of Controversy

The debate over Lincoln's true ancestry has been going on for many years. Mr. Enlow's research includes published sources dating back to 1899. We've put together Mr. Enlow's bibliography, and through our affiliation with Alibris, the used book company, have located copies that can be purchased. [Purchase the books](#)



**More Selections  
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the growing collection of R.V. Enlow original depictions of the Lincoln era.

### Online Devotion to Honest Abe

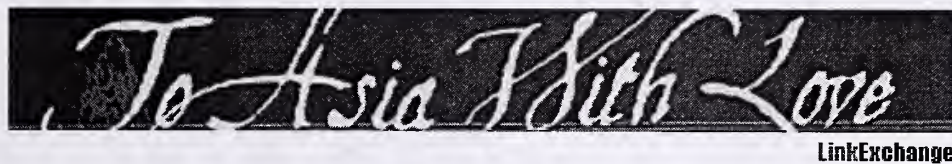
Looking around the Internet, we found several sites devoted to honoring our 16th President. [Visit related sites](#)

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## Rutherford Lincoln legend hits stage

Cassie Tarpley  
Star Staff Writer

SHELBY — "It all started in the Shelby Star," local playwright Ludy Wilkie says of his decades-long search for the true birthplace of President Abraham Lincoln.

Wilkie read an interview with regional history expert Tom Melton that was published in The Star "way back in the '70s," he said, and couldn't let it go.

Melton is part of a small but growing group of followers of legends and folklore that say the original civil rights president was born in Rutherford County, that his mother, Nancy Hanks, was unmarried at the time, that a man named Abraham Enloe was Lincoln's father and that her marriage to Tom Lincoln was a financial arrangement to give the president-to-be a better future.

Wilkie's three-decade query will reach a climax of sorts — if not complete resolution — Friday as his story comes to life on stage in the county in question.

The alleged site of Lincoln's birth might have led Wilkie to name his work "The Mystery of Puzzle Creek." However, the new play explores the legend in dialogue and in song and so is called "The Ballad of Nancy Hanks."

Musician-composer Peter Strickland, also from Cleveland County, used simple melodies reflecting the culture of the early 1800s to help tell the story.

Wilkie said he spent years researching the legends that Abe Lincoln was born in Western North Carolina.

"Just the very notion that Abraham Lincoln might have been born here in North Carolina was just a fantastic idea," he said. "Has this been kept out of the history books deliberately?"

He wanted to know.

Nearly 30 years later, has he come to any conclusions?

"The same conclusion that Tom Melton has — where there is all this smoke, there has to be some fire," Wilkie said. "The more research we do, the more we find it tends to support it."

There is even a group trying to encourage some DNA testing, he said, "and I support that 100 percent. I would like to see them exhume the bodies of Tom Lincoln and Abraham Enloe.

The legends abound and include this little gem, Wilkie said: A traveling actor came through Rutherford County, heard the story and later wrote in his diary that he had been to the place where Lincoln was born. The actor's name was John Wilkes Booth.

It was Booth who shot and killed President Lincoln during a stage play at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C.

Though he's stayed away from rehearsals "as much as I could," he's champing at the bit for Friday's opening performance.

"It's always exciting, just so exciting to see your words come to life, your work come to life."

Most of his days are spent in Rutherford County, where he teaches school. He says, "The folks there are

very supportive.”

Back at home in Shelby, people who've read about the production tell him, “I didn't know you were a playwright,” but Wilkie is actually a veteran writer for the stage, with one other full-length play “Diary of Faust” a pre-WWII story set in Germany, and several smaller works.

Wilkie is a member of the Dramatist Guild, Greensboro Playwrights Forum, and Lost Playwrights of Western North Carolina, and teaches English as a second language in Rutherford County schools.

Strickland arranged public domain folk songs and composed music for two original songs in the show. A graduate of Gardner-Webb University, he teaches music in Cleveland County Schools.

An opening night reception for Wilkie and Strickland is planned at The Firehouse Bed and Breakfast, formerly the city hall and fire station, on Washington Street in Rutherfordton. All are invited.

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**For Additional Information please check out the links below (when applicable)**

<http://www.genealogytoday.com/us/lincoln/>

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## ***Abraham Lincoln, A North Carolinian***

There is substantial evidence that Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, was born not in Kentucky, but on Puzzle Creek near Bostic, North Carolina, in Rutherford County.

Abraham Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks was "bound out" into the care of the Abraham Enlow family, who lived in Rutherford County before moving to Oconaluftee near Cherokee, North Carolina. She was a member of the Concord Baptist Church near Bostic prior to and after the birth of the baby, that she named Abraham. She left the area with "Little Abe" and married Tom Lincoln in Kentucky where Jesse Head, the minister who performed the ceremony, wrote of the young boy's presence.

The following historians and biographers are some who have long documented that Abraham Lincoln was born in North Carolina as recorded in these and other publications

- The Genesis of Lincoln by James H. Cathey (1899)
- Abraham Lincoln, A North Carolinian with Proof by James Caswell Coggins (1926)
- The Eugenics of President Lincoln by James Caswell Coggins (1940)
- The Tarheel Lincoln by Jerry Goodnight and Richard Eller (2003)
- Searching for Lincoln by Jerry Goodnight (2008)

Existence of these North Carolina roots are continually being found from other unrelated sources as well. In Jean Tisdale's book, *Dear Companion*, her compilation of her ancestor's Civil War letters, wife Mary writes to her husband, Ancil Dycus, a Confederate soldier in the siege of Richmond, about the story of "...Lincoln's birth in Rutherford County....and that Nancy Hanks left in a wagon train headed West,...holding Abraham in her lap".

Another such source *The Child That Toileth Not: The Story of A Government Investigation That Was Suppressed* by Thomas Robinson Dawley, Jr. was copyrighted in 1912. This source was written by a special agent of the Bureau of Labor, Department of Commerce, was instigated by his research into mill labor and life in the South. During his study, Dawley uncovered the story of Nancy Hanks' predicament and eventual move to Kentucky following her life with the Enloe family.



The mission of the Bostic Lincoln Center, a non-profit organization, is to collect, document, research and preserve the generational-lore of the area by providing audio/visual histories, exhibits and programs telling this story and other stories of our region.

The Center will conduct tours of cultural and historical sites and promote the distribution of educational materials telling the story of our County.

At left is the marker at the intersection of the Bostic-Sunshine Highway and Walker Mill Road, one mile from the traditional birthplace. Tours are available by contacting The Bostic Lincoln Center at [Info@BosticLincolnCenter.com](mailto:Info@BosticLincolnCenter.com), or by mail at P. O. Box 153, Bostic, N. C. 28018.

# Abe Lincoln was the son of a Rutherford man, oral history purports



**Rob Neufeld**  
VISITING  
OUR PAST

**A**braham Lincoln was illegitimate, and ... his father was Abraham Enloe," stated James M. Cathey in his 1899 book, "The Genesis of Lincoln." According to historical clues and oral testimonies, Enloe, a prominent Scots-Irish citizen of Rutherford County, took in Nancy Hanks as a house servant and, after she'd produced his son, arranged for her to be wedded to Tom Lincoln of Kentucky.

Standard biographies don't refute this version of Lincoln life. They ignore it.

Joshua Wolf Shenk's 2005 work, "Lincoln's Melancholy," the product of seven years of research, makes no mention of the alternate history, instead attributing Abe's dark side to a pattern of mental illness in Tom Lincoln's family. Richard Carwardine's Lincoln Prize-winning 2006 biography, "Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power," is mum about Enloe.

Pulitzer Prize-winning David Herbert Donald is an exception. In his biography, "Lincoln," he makes one allusion — in a footnote.

"It is possible," he com-

ments, "that Abraham Lincoln doubted that Thomas Lincoln really was his father ... (which) left the door for speculation that Abraham's father was one Abraham Enlow, who bore more a physical resemblance to the future President. ... These legends have long ago been exploded, and the story of Lincoln's bastardy is utterly groundless."

I've been searching for the conclusive "explosion" of the "legends," and find only debatable counterarguments. In the meantime, the Bostic Lincoln Center has formed to commemorate Lincoln's Tar Heel origins. And the Rutherford County Chamber

of Commerce has embraced its efforts. The center sponsors a "Lincoln Origins Forum" in Forest City on April 14.

Here, in brief, is the alternate history, shaped largely from James Caswell Coggins' 1940 volume, "The Eugenics of President Abraham Lincoln."

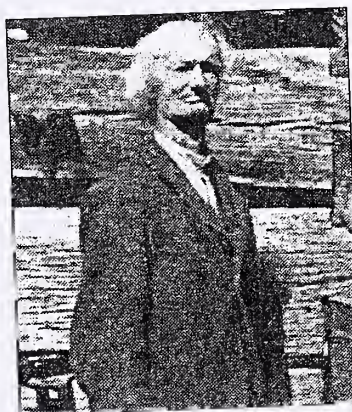
Nancy Hanks was herself the illegitimate child of Lucy Hanks and a German planter, Michael Tanner, who, to avoid scrutiny, had the girl adopted as an "orphan" by Lucy's brother, Dicky of Gaston County. Dicky Hanks' tragedies — drunkenness,

Please see NEUFELD on C4

4/4/2007

## LEARN ABOUT LINCOLN

The Bostic Lincoln Center sponsors the "Lincoln Origins Forum" from 8:15 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 14 in the Cool Springs Administration Building in Forest City. Speakers include Jerry Goodnight, co-author, "The Tarheel Lincoln: North Carolina Origins of Honest Abe"; Aaron Hyatt, Ph.D, retired, former president of Macon State College, Georgia; Tom Melton, Rutherford County's official story keeper; and Keith Price, president, The Bostic Lincoln Center Inc. Call 288-8076 or visit [www.bosticlincolncenter.com](http://www.bosticlincolncenter.com).



SPECIAL TO THE CITIZEN-TIMES

Wesley Enloe, son of Abraham Enloe, pictured here at age 81, is seen to share Abe Lincoln's features. Photo by James H. Cathey from his 1899 book, "The Genesis of Lincoln."

## NEUFELD: Rumors have persisted about Lincoln's N.C. origins

Continued from C1

imprisonment and then death in a house fire — led to Nancy's employment by Abraham Enloe in Bostic.

Nancy sang, dance and quilted with girlfriends, and was happy until her maturity occasioned the event that launched Mrs. Enloe's crusade to defame and banish her.

Nancy was sent to Ocona Lufta, where Abraham Enloe had pioneered a new community; and then banished from there to have her child in hiding back in Bostic.

Two of her girlfriends had held Nancy's baby, according to their descendants' testimony. Oral history — and there's lots more of it than this — is dismissed by scholars, but held onto like a flag by locals.

Subsequently, Nancy's supposed biological father, Tanner, had her transported with baby Abe to Ocona Lufta, where she was then sent to live with Enloe's daughter, Nancy Enloe Thompson, in Kentucky. Later, for a fee, Tom Lincoln, a man subject to fits of violence, accepted Nancy and Abe as his own. After Nancy's early death in 1818 — reportedly of milk sickness — family records began to be destroyed and altered to give Lincoln his legitimate credentials.

Rob Neufeld writes the weekly local history feature, "Visiting Our Past," for the Citizen-Times. Contact him at RNeufeld@charter.net or 768-2665.



Posted on Tue, Apr. 29, 2008

## Group says N.C. is Lincoln birthplace

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois each lay claim to part of Abraham Lincoln's youth.

Now, a North Carolina county is trying to get in on the act.

A group in Rutherford County, N.C., has opened the Bostic Lincoln Center and is petitioning the federal government to run a DNA test of Lincoln's father, Thomas, to see whether it matches some of the 16th president's saved genetic material.

Keith Price, president of Bostic Lincoln Center Inc., said Lincoln was born in rural North Carolina, where Price thinks Nancy Hanks gave birth to him out of wedlock.

Price is relying on an oral tradition that says Hanks' family, in the late 1700s, traveled from Virginia to North Carolina, where she worked for Abraham Enloe, whom some point to as a possible father.

A picture of Enloe's brother looks "very much like" Abe, Price said. Thomas Lincoln, on the other hand was more like a "fireplug," Price said.

The effort has met with resistance from the government bureaucracy and the consensus of historians, including Darrell Meadows, a Lincoln expert for the Kentucky Historical Society. "I'm not worried about it," Meadows said.

Meadows' group is promoting Lincoln's ties to Kentucky this year as part of his bicentennial birthday celebration. Meadows defended the prevailing birth story.

Lincoln's recognized birth date is recorded in a family Bible, Meadows said. That day is key to the argument, because official documents -- including a marriage certificate and tax records -- put the Lincolns in Kentucky during the years surrounding 1809.

Still, Meadows can't flat-out prove Lincoln was born in Kentucky. Officials at the time did not record his birth on a wind-swept ridge just south of Hodgenville, which is in modern-day LaRue County.

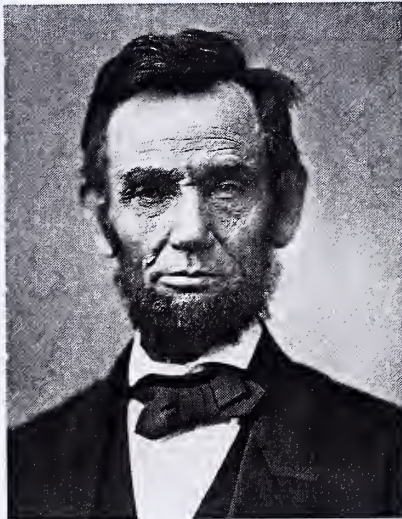
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## Was President Lincoln from N.C.? One historian debunks lore

Michael Barrett

2010-04-14 18:47:43



History tells us only that the life of the Great Emancipator began when he was born in a one-room log cabin in Kentucky.

But generations of area residents have grown up believing that Abraham Lincoln's celebrated existence began in a rather inglorious manner here 202 years ago.

In the wake of his death – 145 years ago today – stories have cropped up in Rutherford and Gaston counties, as well as the rest of North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky claiming the president had area ties. Historians have found little concrete evidence to prove any of the rumors true.

### Challenging the rumors

Abraham Lincoln has been the subject of more books than any president or scholar in history. Rumors and claims about his paternity have persisted since the late 19th century, as he began to be idolized in the

United States.

Experts have long believed that an opportunity to link Lincoln to a given area would have been seen as advantageous by local writers. And Lincoln apparently didn't talk much about his childhood and background, leading to rampant speculation.

Ansley Wegner, a research historian at the N.C. Office of Archives and History, has extensively researched the rumors of North Carolina connections.

"I went back through the census and tried to find some credibility in any piece of the story in North Carolina," she said. "And there just wasn't any."

Wegner looked even more closely at the connection with Abraham Enloe in Rutherford County.

"Truly, when I saw the photo of Wesley Enloe years ago, I bought it," she said.

But concrete records also don't support that claim. And there was another twist of note.

→ In an 1893 interview with The Charlotte Observer, Wesley Enloe was quoted as saying he had never heard of the connection between his father and Abraham Lincoln until he read the story in an Asheville newspaper in 1871. But by 1909, likely having grown fond of being considered Lincoln's half-brother, Enloe stated without question that Nancy Hanks lived with his family, and that his father sent her to Kentucky because she had borne him a son.

"At some point, he just decided that would be cool," Wegner said with a laugh. "He was going around dressed like him, in a top hat and suit."

### The myth lives on

Overall, there are some 12 stories across several states involving Lincoln paternity claims, Wegner said. She isn't an expert on them all, but as for the North Carolina claims, they just don't hold water.

"At the end of the day, in my job, you've got to have a contemporary document proving something of the story," she said. "It's a great story. But it's all circumstantial."

It's no surprise the rumor has lived on, Wegner said.

"By the time it's written down in a community's history, it's taken as fact and passed on," she said. "Then you've got a legend that's undocumented."

*You can reach Michael Barrett at 704-869-1826.*

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Rec<sup>d</sup> of Sam<sup>l</sup> Hayercraft Sheriff  
of Harden County fifteen pounds  
my salary for the year 1794  
Atty for the County

Wm<sup>l</sup> McClung  
Jest  
Lm<sup>l</sup> Kawan

Feby 7<sup>th</sup> 1795  
Rec<sup>d</sup> of Samuel Hayercraft Sheriff  
of Harden County Six pounds five  
Shillings It being my salary  
for Extra Services for the year  
1794

Isaac Hynes

Rec<sup>d</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> Sept 1795  
of Sam<sup>l</sup> Hayercraft Esq. the  
full amt. of an Exec<sup>n</sup> mon  
Trigger & Thom. Hargis & Co  
I Hargis

March 26<sup>th</sup> 1796

Rec<sup>d</sup> of Sam<sup>l</sup> Hayercraft for  
Mon due on his Order from  
Sam<sup>l</sup> Berks Seventeen pounds  
ten Shillings being a part  
of a Judgment obtained ag<sup>t</sup>  
Nichols Welch by Michael  
Herkham & Abraham Enlow

See also:

*The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln: Was He the Son of  
Thomas Lincoln? An Essay 1920*

By William E. Barton

Item# 71200908401304





